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PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN FACILITATING AND PROMOTING THE TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES, COOPERATION AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman

Progress achieved in facilitating and promoting the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building

1. The Commission highlighted the crucial importance of the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building for achieving sustainable development in all countries, and also highlighted the importance of operationalizing objectives agreed to at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in this regard.

2. The Commission stressed the need, inter alia, (a) to promote, facilitate and finance, as appropriate, the access to and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights; (b) to promote long-term technological cooperation and partnership between holders of environmentally sound technologies and potential users; and (c) to improve the endogenous capacities of those countries to develop, assess, manage and utilize such technologies, through, inter alia, research and development, education and training.

3. The Commission decided that in order to make operational those provisions of Agenda 21 relating to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building, there is a particular need to focus on,

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* E/CN.17/1993/4.

inter alia, the dissemination of information, the removal of barriers and the creation of incentives, financial support and endogenous capacity-building. In this regard, the Commission:

(a) Urged bilateral and multilateral donors as well as national Governments to undertake efforts to increase their financial support at the international, regional and subregional levels for activities that are designed to promote and facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular to developing countries and to the building of the endogenous capacities of developing countries to develop and manage those technologies, including state-of-the-art technologies and technologies already in place;

(b) Urged Governments to develop policies and innovative mechanisms that would promote and/or improve access to environmentally sound technologies, in particular of developing countries, and to provide appropriate incentives, fiscal or otherwise, to encourage the private sector to transfer those technologies, in particular to the developing countries, in accordance with paragraph 34.18 (e) of Agenda 21;

(c) Urged all Governments, wherever appropriate and taking into account national strategies, to identify and implement an appropriate mix of economic instruments and normative measures to encourage and support the investment and infrastructure required to promote access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular to developing countries;

(d) Urged Governments to formulate policies and programmes for the effective transfer of environmentally sound technologies that are publicly owned or in the public domain;

(e) Recognized the need to develop methodologies and establish, where appropriate, institutions for technology assessment;

(f) Also recognized that in addition to promoting the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, the Commission should also promote both the development of methodologies for and the assessment of the environmental, health, safety and social impacts of technologies. In this context, national and international measures should be strengthened to promote information exchange on and discourage the transfer of activities that employ hazardous technologies which are not used and/or are prohibited in developed countries;

(g) Urged Governments and appropriate organizations to modify their policies and regulations to facilitate access to, transfer of and introduction of environmentally sound technologies;

(h) Stressed the importance of strengthening national capacities to assess, develop, manage and apply new technologies, and in this context, the need to strengthen existing institutions, train personnel at all levels and educate the end-users of new technologies;

(i) Urged developing countries that are in a position to do so to cooperate among themselves with a view to developing and improving environmentally sound technologies, and exhorted the international community, as well as the institutions of the United Nations system, to provide full support

to initiatives intended to promote technological cooperation and capacity-building among developing countries;

(j) Recognized the positive initiatives of developing countries in the field of environmentally sound technology, for example in biotechnology, and urged developed countries and the United Nations system to support such initiatives.

4. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to initiate actions aimed at the full implementation of paragraphs 34.15, 34.16, 34.17 and 34.26 of Agenda 21, to prepare proposals on ways and means of facilitating such implementation and to inform the Commission at its next session of the progress achieved in this respect. This should include ways and means of:

(a) Considering the designation of a focal point for technology assessment for the implementation of mandated activities on technology assessment within the United Nations system that could serve as a clearing-house for information and referrals;

(b) Ensuring, taking into account initiatives being undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other relevant United Nations bodies, the full implementation of General Assembly resolutions relating to the collection and dissemination of information on environmental emergencies that may result from poor or inappropriate application of technologies, to early warning information aimed at avoiding environmental disasters;

(c) Supporting the establishment of a collaborative network of national, subregional and regional research and information systems, including mechanisms that enable countries, in particular developing countries, to access information at low cost.

5. The Commission supports the establishment of environmental technology centres at the international, regional, subregional and national levels, as appropriate, and the strengthening of existing centres. The objective of these centres would be to improve the capacity to promote the development, transfer and application of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding technical know-how with special focus on developing countries' needs, and to foster sustainable development, in particular in developing countries.

6. The Commission invited Governments, as well as relevant intergovernmental bodies, to provide information on the implementation of science and technology-related provisions of Agenda 21, particularly with regard to progress achieved in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building, in line with decision __ of the Commission on the guidelines to the Secretariat for organizing information provided by Governments on issues related to the implementation of Agenda 21. Such information should be provided in accordance with the multi-year thematic programme.

7. Recognizing that the Commission has been mandated to review progress concerning the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building for the implementation of Agenda 21, the Commission decided to prepare for the discussion of the second session of the Commission through the establishment of an intersessional ad hoc open-ended working group, for a trial

period of one year, to be composed of Governments that will nominate experts to assist in the task of assessing and suggesting specific measures to support and promote access to transfer of technology as indicated in paragraph 34.18 of Agenda 21, in particular subparagraphs (a) and (e), and on the basis of the above, in the development of the policy framework to facilitate, promote and finance technology transfer, particularly in relation to the sectoral clusters under consideration. The Commission calls on its Bureau to coordinate the work of the open-ended ad hoc working group, as well as the inputs from other experts in relevant fields, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other major groups. The Commission requests the Secretary-General to provide support, within existing resources, to organize the above-mentioned working group. The Commission will decide on the agenda and procedures for the working group, which will report on its findings to the Commission.

8. In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1993/215, the ad hoc working group should have a dialogue and interaction with representatives of non-governmental organizations and major groups, under the relevant rules of procedure, ensuring equitable participation of non-governmental organizations from developed and developing countries and from all regions.

9. The Commission emphasized the need for effective interaction and collaborative arrangements with intergovernmental bodies which are of special relevance to the work of the Commission in relation to promoting and facilitating the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building, such as with the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Commission on Transnational Corporations and the Governing Councils of UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. For this purpose the Commission invited the Economic and Social Council to consider the intergovernmental machinery related to science and technology in the coordination segment of its substantive session of 1994, with a view to clarifying the distribution of labour and cooperation mechanisms.

10. The Commission underlined the need to consider, where appropriate, information, which could be made available by the relevant Conference of the parties, on the implementation of environmental conventions as it relates to the support, promotion and access to environmentally sound technologies.

11. The Commission underlined the importance of engaging in dialogue and interaction with other relevant intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, including the relevant transnational corporations, and other major groups, to encourage new forms of technology cooperation and partnership in technological areas of particular relevance to developing countries.